

## **Iowa's Differentiated Accountability System**

Traditionally, Iowa's school districts, non-public schools, and Area Education Agencies (AEAs) have received accreditation visits on a five-year cycle, whereby 20% of districts and schools are visited each year. In addition, districts and nonpublic schools submit information to the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) annually in many forms, such as the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), Annual Performance Report (APR), and Iowa Core implementation plan. A variety of other plans are submitted less frequently or only on an as-needed basis. Examples include plans required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for Districts and Schools in Need of Assistance (DINA/SINA), the District-Developed Service Delivery Plan (DDSDP) for students with disabilities, and corrective action plans under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Beginning with implementation of a pilot in 2015-2016 and full implementation in 2016-2017, the IDE is leading the state to a new system of differentiated accountability and support. Iowa's new system is founded on seven basic concepts:

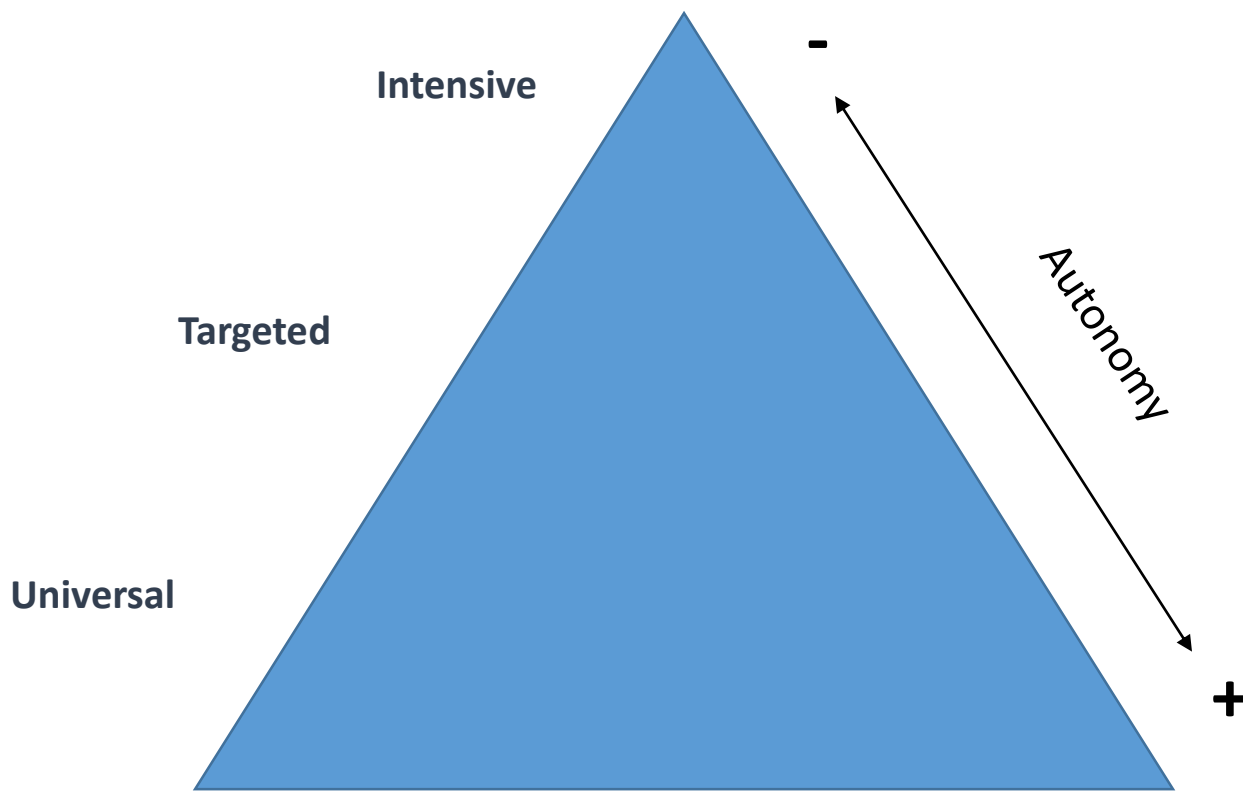
1. Tiered support
2. Healthy Indicators
3. Earned autonomy
4. Collaborative Inquiry Questions
5. A single continuous improvement process
6. Streamlined reporting
7. Emphasis on results for Iowa learners

### **1. Tiered Support**

Iowa's Differentiated Accountability model will include levels or tiers of support. The basis for a tiered model of support is the idea that not all districts, schools, preschool programs or AEAs need the same level of support in all areas. This is similar to the idea of a multi-tiered system of supports in education as applied to classrooms and students. A model is presented in Figure 1 below.

Districts, schools, and AEAs will be placed in tiers based on healthy indicator data. The supports provided to districts, schools and AEAs will vary based on need, as will the required elements of action plans, desk audits, and site visits.

*Figure 1: A Tiered Model of Supports*



## **2. Healthy Indicators**

Iowa's model will rely on data – known as Healthy Indicators – to inform decision-making about which districts, schools, and AEAs require desk audits, remote interviews, or on-site visits and what supports they need to successfully engage in continuous improvement. The Healthy Indicators will use information from the Attendance Center Rankings (ACR) legislation of 2014, as determined useful for driving improvement in districts, schools and AEAs. The Healthy Indicators will also measure critical aspects of implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Possible data sources from the ACR legislation include: proficiency, academic growth, attendance, sub-group performance, college readiness, suspension/expulsion rates, student/parent engagement, parent/community involvement, employee working conditions, staff turnover, and post-graduation data. Additional Healthy Indicators may include: use of valid and reliable assessment tools, percent of students proficient with core instruction, percent of students proficient with targeted and intensive interventions, operation of a high-functioning leadership team, and financial information. All of these data indicators are being operationalized and synthesized by a Healthy Indicators work group made up of members of

the IDE and AEA system, and will be vetted broadly for input from LEAs and nonpublic schools. A possible dashboard of healthy indicators is provided in Figure 2 below. The best developed healthy indicators we have at this time are those regarding assessment and universal instruction.

*Figure 2: Healthy Indicators*

| District A              |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Assessment ●            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 95%</li> <li>2. 75%</li> <li>3. Yes</li> <li>4. No</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of valid/reliable universal screening assessments for all students (% screened)</li> <li>2. Use of valid/reliable progress monitoring assessments for all students who require progress monitoring (% assessed)</li> <li>3. Comprehensive, balanced assessment system in place (assessment calendar)</li> <li>4. Use of data-based decision-making (data analysis via data teams, data days)</li> </ol> |
| Universal Instruction ● | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 65%</li> <li>2. 36%</li> <li>3. -</li> </ol>                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percent proficient with universal instruction</li> <li>2. Growth</li> <li>3. Closing gaps</li> </ol>  |
| Interventions ●         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 77%</li> </ol>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percent proficient with targeted and/or intensive instruction, using evidence-based interventions, achieving growth</li> </ol>  |
| Leadership ●            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 55%</li> <li>2. 85%</li> </ol>                                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership team in place</li> <li>2. consensus present</li> </ol>   |
| Infrastructure ●        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 99%</li> <li>2. Yes</li> </ol>                                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funds are allocated</li> <li>2. technology adequate</li> </ol>  |

### 3. Earned Autonomy

A concept that is central to the state's new differentiated accountability model is that of earned autonomy. That is, the more success a district, school, or AEA has in maintaining compliance with state and federal law and achieving critical results for Iowa's learners, the less prescriptive the IDE will be in terms of required audits, reports, and site visits. For the highest achieving districts and schools, visits may be conducted to learn about best practices in the state rather than to conduct accreditation checks. Alternatively, districts, schools and AEAs that struggle to meet compliance requirements or achieve results can expect to have more restrictions placed on the choices available to them and to be audited for compliance and/or visited more frequently. The concept of earned autonomy is illustrated in Figure 1.

#### 4. Collaborative Inquiry Questions

As part of the work being conducted through Collaborating for Iowa's Kids (C4K), a joint venture among the IDE, AEAs, LEAs and Iowa's other education stakeholders, the education system has adopted a set of Collaborative Inquiry Questions (CIQs) on which the new accountability system will be based. The CIQs are based on two bodies of research: systems-change and MTSS. These evidence-based questions are the foundation of system change and continuous improvement in Iowa. The CIQs are listed below.

##### *The Collaborative Inquiry Questions*

###### Consensus

- A. Is there initial and ongoing administrator consensus to develop and implement MTSS?
- B. Is there initial and ongoing staff consensus to develop and implement MTSS?

###### Consensus, Infrastructure and Implementation

- C. Is there a leadership team willing to accept responsibility for development, implementation, and sustainability of MTSS?

###### Infrastructure and Implementation

- D. Do we have an established and ongoing collaborative inquiry process for implementation of MTSS?
  - 1. Is the Universal Tier Sufficient?
  - 2. If the Universal Tier is not sufficient, what are the needs that must be addressed?
  - 3. How will Universal Tier needs be addressed?
  - 4. How will the implementation of the Universal Tier actions be monitored over time?
  - 5. Have Universal Tier actions been effective?
  - 6. Which students need support in addition to the Universal Tier?
  - 7. Which of the Targeted and/or Intensive Tier resources are needed to meet the needs of identified students?
  - 8. How will the Targeted and/or Intensive Tier options be implemented?
  - 9. How will the implementation of the Targeted and Intensive Tiers be monitored over time?
  - 10. How will the effectiveness of the Targeted and Intensive Tiers be evaluated??

###### Sustainability

- E. Do you have an established structure to provide ongoing professional learning and coaching to support all staff members?
- F. How do you ensure evaluation of MTSS implementation and impact on achievement?
- G. What structure does the leadership team have in place to support sustainability of MTSS over time?

## 5. A Single Continuous Improvement Process

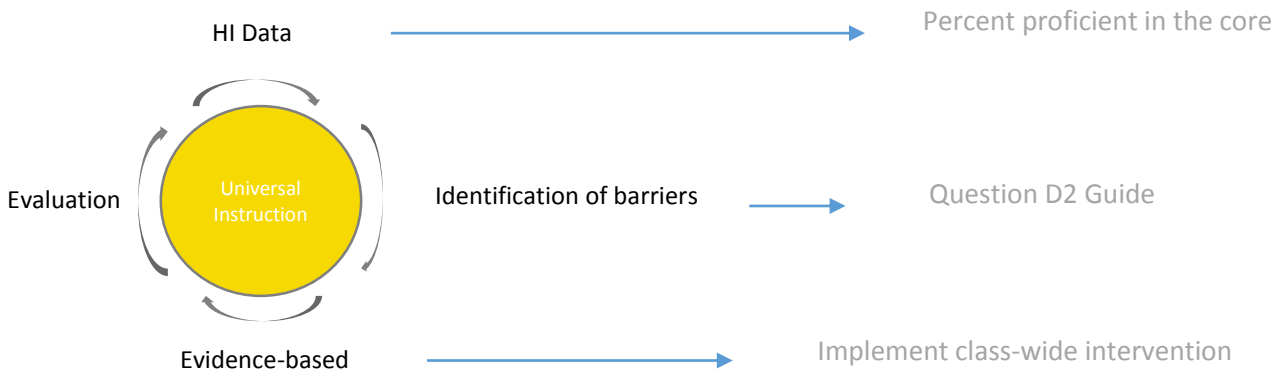
Iowa's differentiated accountability model will be supported by a single continuous improvement process. Rather than using several variations on the standard model of continuous improvement, we have commissioned a C4K work team to unify all of the models we currently use into one. This single model will replace all current variations and will be founded on the Iowa Professional Development Model, which is based in continuous improvement. The single model can be used largely in place of things like the current CSIP, SINA/DINA plans, and Iowa Core plans. Some questions and reports will always be required to meet state and federal requirements.

Models depicting the way the collaborative inquiry questions flow into a single continuous improvement model are depicted in Figures 3 and 4.

*Figure 3: A Unified Model of Improvement*



*Figure 4: The Continuous Improvement Process*






## 6. Streamlined Reporting

Another central aspect of Iowa's new differentiated accountability model is streamlined, centralized reporting. Districts, schools, and AEAs should be able to access all of their compliance and performance information for the purposes of accountability and improvement with little effort, and the reports provided must help leaders plan for the use of local resources. Figures 5 and 6 below depict mock-ups of dashboards that districts, schools, AEAs, and IDE personnel will have access to as part of the new system. These reports will rely on data systems that will take time to build, but that are in process.

Figure 5: Compliance Reporting

| District A  |                             |              |              |                            |              |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Title IA  | Requirement                 | Status       | IDEA B       | Requirement                | Status       |
| § 1112(c)   | Assurances                  | Compliant    | § 611(a)     | State activities           | Compliant    |
| § 1112(d)   | Consultation                | Compliant    | § 612(a)(11) | General Supervision        | Compliant    |
| § 1114(a)(1)  | May not consolidate funds   | Compliant    | § 613(a)(1)  | LEA Eligibility            | Noncompliant |
| § 1115(b)(1)  | Eligible population         | Noncompliant | § 613(a)(3)  | Personnel development      | Compliant    |
| § 1116(b)(1)(B)   | Deadline for identification | Compliant    | § 613(f)     | Early intervening services | Noncompliant |
| Designations: DINA 3, IDEA Part B Needs Assistance Year 2, ACR: 2 Buildings Commendable |                             |              |              |                            |              |

Figure 6: Data Dashboard


| District   | Compliance and Designations         | HI  | Tiered Support   | Support Provided  |
|------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| District A | 78%, DINA 4, 3 ACR Priority Schools |  | <b>Compliance:</b> Intensive<br><b>Assessment:</b> Intensive<br><b>Universal Instruction:</b> Intensive<br><b>Targeted and Intensive Instruction:</b> Targeted<br><b>Leadership:</b> Targeted<br><b>Infrastructure:</b> Targeted   | <b>Compliance:</b> Level 2 Desk Audit<br><b>Assessment:</b> Focused visit<br><b>Universal Instruction:</b> Focused visit<br><b>Targeted and Intensive Instruction:</b> Remote interview<br><b>Leadership:</b> Remote interview<br><b>Infrastructure:</b> Remote interview |
| District B | 98%, DINA 2                         |  | <b>Compliance:</b> Universal<br><b>Assessment:</b> Targeted<br><b>Universal Instruction:</b> Intensive<br><b>Targeted and Intensive Instruction:</b> Universal<br><b>Leadership:</b> Universal<br><b>Infrastructure:</b> Universal | <b>Compliance:</b> Desk Audit<br><b>Assessment:</b> Remote interview<br><b>Universal Instruction:</b> Focused visit<br><b>Targeted and Intensive Instruction:</b> NA<br><b>Leadership:</b> NA<br><b>Infrastructure:</b> NA  |
| District C | 100%, 2 ACR Commendable Schools     |  | <b>Compliance:</b> Universal<br><b>Assessment:</b> Universal<br><b>Universal Instruction:</b> Universal<br><b>Targeted and Intensive Instruction:</b> Universal<br><b>Leadership:</b> Universal<br><b>Infrastructure:</b> Targeted | <b>Compliance:</b> Desk Audit<br><b>Assessment:</b> NA<br><b>Universal Instruction:</b> Focused visit to share successful practices<br><b>Targeted and Intensive Instruction:</b> NA<br><b>Leadership:</b> NA<br><b>Infrastructure:</b> NA                                |

## 7. Emphasis on results for Iowa learners

The final, and perhaps most important, concept central to Iowa's differentiated accountability model is that not all of our efforts are equal. As a state system there are things we are required to do by law, and things we choose to do. There are also things we can do that have a large, positive effect on the lives of kids in Iowa, and things that have either a negligible or – in some cases – negative effect. The IDE has chosen to use the heuristic provided in Figure 7 to help us determine where to put our efforts and where to ask districts, schools, and AEAs to place their efforts.



Figure 7: Effort and Effect

|              | Positive Effect for Kids | Negligible or Negative Effect for Kids  |
|--------------|--------------------------|---|
| Required     | Effort                   | Effort  |
| Not Required | Effort                   |  |

Iowa's differentiated accountability system will begin implementation with the 2015-16 school year for a pilot group of preschool programs, districts, accredited non-public schools, and AEAs. This has a number of implications for programs in the state.

First, the five-year accreditation and improvement cycle will no longer be used to determine whether or when a pre-kindergarten program, district, accredited non-public school, or AEA will receive a site visit. Determinations about site visits, their scope, and the personnel involved will be based on data.

All of Iowa's education programs may find that compliance monitoring is conducted differently than it has been in the past. Preschool programs, districts, accredited non-public schools, and AEAs may be asked to provide assurances for some requirements they did not provide previously, conduct desk audit activities for requirements they routinely met during site visits in the past, or participate in focused monitoring on topics the IDE is aware require attention.

As a system, we will need to adjust to provide support to the programs in the greatest need of assistance across the state. The Iowa Support Team, traditionally tasked with providing support to Title I Districts and Schools in Need of Assistance under ESEA, will be expanded and part of their mission adjusted to fit this need. The IDE is actively pursuing the development of a statewide school improvement support network to support all preschool programs, districts, accredited non-public schools, and AEAs in their accountability and improvement efforts.

Finally, our data and reporting systems will need to be adjusted, and in some cases completely reprogrammed, to create the user-friendly reports and dashboards required to enhance improvement under this system.

If you have questions about Iowa's differentiated accountability system please contact Amy Williamson at [amy.williamson@iowa.gov](mailto:amy.williamson@iowa.gov) for more information.